



caring about you & your environment

Report 02.661

23 October 2002

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Report to Wellington Regional Council
from Margaret Shields, Chairperson

Chairperson's Report

1. Leave of Absence

Cr Laidlaw has sought leave of absence from 12 – 22 November. I recommend that this leave be granted.

Recommendation

That the Council grant Cr Laidlaw leave of absence for the period 12 – 22 November 2002.

2. Visit from Auckland Regional Council

I am sure that Councillors will agree that the visit from our colleagues at Auckland Regional Council was useful and informative. Clearly our councils confront many similar issues not shared by other regional councils, and its great to have the opportunity to discuss these face-to-face in an informal setting.

It has been mooted that we visit Auckland in October or November next year. The Auckland Regional Councillors are even hoping that they might be able to demonstrate their new train service.

3. Consultation on the Long Term Council Community Plan

Like other Councillors, I have attended several meetings with community groups to receive input on the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan. While some Councillors may feel that the number of submissions is low, I've been pleasantly surprised by the quality of the submissions received and the enthusiasm shown by the community groups I've visited. There are of course many more formal and informal opportunities for the community to input to our Plan before we adopt it in June next year.

4. **Meetings with Ministers and Members of Parliament**

I will be meeting with Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Local Government, on Thursday, 24 October. The Minister is meeting with all local authorities and I will report on the outcome at the Council meeting.

I have also made arrangements for Cr McDavitt and myself to brief Hon Paul Swain, Minister of Transport, on the parameters of our Regional Land Transport Strategy.

In addition to these meetings with Government ministers, I will be meeting with Gerry Brownlee, the National Party spokesman on local government who is meeting with all local authorities.

5. **Councillor Workloads**

Councillors are currently confronting one of the busiest periods they are likely to face within the current triennium. Arguably, it may be the busiest period we are ever likely to face in local government. Not only are we preparing a new Long Term Council Community Plan/Long Term Financial Strategy, but we face:

- new local government legislation
- the potential acquisition of Tranz Metro Wellington
- a new national transport strategy and associated legislation
- new electoral, rating and emergency management legislation
- new proposals from the Higher Salary Commission on Councillor remuneration.

And, of course, normal Council business continues. All Councillors are facing big challenges and time pressures. This has also put additional strains on Council staff.

6. **Attendance at National General Assembly of Australian Local Government**

I will be out of the country from 1-6 November representing *Local Government New Zealand* at the National General Assembly of Australian Local Government.

Recommendation

That the Report be received.

Chairperson